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**ESTIMATE OF REACTIONS TO VARYING DEGREES OF US
MILITARY COMMITMENT AND ACTIVITY IN THE NEAR EAST**

**An Intelligence Estimate
Prepared by
The Estimates Group
Office of Intelligence Research**

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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THE PROBLEM

1. To estimate foreign reactions to:
 - (a) an explicit US commitment to defend Turkey and Greece;
 - (b) subsequent US programs to build up military strength in Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean area.

CONCLUSIONS

2. The Soviet Union would react to a US commitment to defend Turkey and Greece by exerting increased pressure, through measures short of war, upon the countries of the Near East.

The Soviet reaction to subsequent US military programs in this area would depend on the scope of these programs. There is a real possibility that the Kremlin would respond to US initiation of a large-scale military program, particularly one whose completion threatened to deny Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean area to the Soviet Union in time of war, by undertaking preventive military action against this area.

3. Turkey would react to the receipt of a US security guarantee by allowing the US to carry out any desired program for using or constructing bases in Turkey. Greece's present pro-Western policy would not be affected by the receipt of such a guarantee or by US military programs in this area. Reactions in other foreign countries to any of the contingencies envisaged in this paper would not be decisive.

DISCUSSION

4. Assumption A: Extension of a US commitment to defend Turkey and Greece against aggression:

(a) Basic Soviet policy would not be affected by this US action, since a de facto US commitment to defend Turkey and Greece is probably already considered to exist by the Kremlin. This US action would, however, bring on an intensification of Soviet propaganda, diplomatic pressure, and subversive activity in the Eastern Mediterranean area.

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(b) Turkey would be moved by the receipt of a US military guarantee to go even further than it otherwise would in its pro-Western alignment. Specifically, Turkey would allow the US to continue and accelerate the establishment of air bases in Turkey, and would also be less reluctant to furnish active military support for any future US moves to resist Soviet aggression (e.g., against Yugoslavia). The Turkish government would be unwilling to take these steps now, since it would find it difficult to justify them to the Turkish people and political opposition without having obtained a specific US military guarantee in return. Greek policy would not be affected by the receipt of such a US guarantee, since Greece is already fully committed to a pro-US and anti-Soviet alignment. Greece would, however, be disturbed if Turkey received a US guarantee, while it received none.

(c) Yugoslavia would be pleased by a US commitment to defend Turkey, since it would interpret this as an indication of US determination to defend and strengthen the Eastern Mediterranean area generally. Yugoslavia would probably not be moved to seek such a US commitment by this US step. There might be some concern in Yugoslavia over the effect that a US guarantee to defend Greece would have on potential territorial disputes between Yugoslavia and Greece.

(d) The Western European reaction would, on the whole, be favorable, since the prevailing feeling would be that this US commitment reduced the probability of a Soviet attack on Greece and Turkey. However, there would be fear, in some quarters, of the possibly provocative effect of this step on Soviet attitudes.

The reactions estimated above would not be affected by the manner in which the US commitments were made, except in the case of Western Europe. The reaction in this area would be less favorable if the US tried to extend those commitments by seeking the inclusion of Greece and Turkey in NATO than if the US extended the commitments directly or pressed for a separate Mediterranean pact.

5. Assumption B: US commitments to defend Turkey and Greece, followed by US programs to build up military strength in Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean area:

(a) The Soviet reaction would depend on the scale of the military effort involved. The Kremlin is believed to be determined not to allow the completion of a "decisive" Western mobilization, i.e., one that would give the Western powers the ability to destroy the Soviet Union.

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If the Kremlin does not consider that present US and NATO military plans already portend such a decisive mobilization, however, it would be unlikely to consider that they had been rendered decisive by a continuation of the present US program of building a few air bases in the Near East. The Soviet Union probably discounts, to some extent, the value of scattered US installations in an area that it presumably expects to conquer soon after the start of general war. Since that conquest could not be instantaneous, however, initiation of a new and expanded US air base program might represent a significant potential addition to Western capabilities in the view of the Kremlin, and so might bring these projected capabilities somewhat closer to the point at which prevention of their realization would seem to warrant Soviet military action. In other words, if the Soviet Union were already close to a decision in favor of war, a new and expanded air base program might be one factor in hastening that decision.

A much more serious view would, however, be taken by the Kremlin if the US tried to build up enough strength in and around Turkey to threaten the present Soviet capability of over-running this area in time of war. The Kremlin might feel that present Western mobilization plans, even if not decisive by themselves, would be rendered decisive if they were accompanied by a program whose completion would enable the US, in time of war, to maintain control of an area of the Eurasian land mass from which strong land attacks on the Soviet bloc might eventually be launched. The Kremlin may well consider that Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean represent such an area, and so may feel bound to undertake military action to prevent the completion of any military program which threatens to deny this area to the Soviet Union in a general war.

(b) The reaction in Greece and Turkey to a US program of building up military strength in the Eastern Mediterranean would be favorable. These countries are less afraid of a general war per se than of being the individual objects of a Soviet attack which the US might not resist with all the force at its command.

(c) Yugoslavia would welcome a US program of building up military strength in the Eastern Mediterranean, since this program, without directly and provocatively focusing Soviet attention on Yugoslavia, would enhance the Western ability to aid Yugoslavia if that country were attacked.

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(d) The Western European reaction would be ambivalent. Those European elements which favor meeting Soviet pressure with Western strength would be encouraged, while those which fear the provocation that such strength offers to the Soviet Union would be frightened. If the US military program were on a relatively small scale, the first reaction would probably predominate. If, however, the US program represented a major military effort, which obviously greatly alarmed the Soviet Union, the second reaction would be quite significant.

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